



The Spectacle

From the Office Down the Hall

When Holidays Take a Holiday

We are entering the eleventh month. Frost warnings are posted and the winter enclosure, our one rampart against the chill wind, is being readied for the mansion. It is dark when we enter the House to clean and gloaming when we leave. But although the trees are turning stony and spare and the grass will soon turn brown, there is, none-the-less, a genuine sense of celebration beginning to sound. In October, 1863, Lincoln said, "The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies." And so it has. It is holiday season!

Lincoln's words opened his proclamation establishing Thanksgiving as a federal holiday. But Thanksgiving had already been around a long time. President George Washington, G.W.P. Custis' "father," proclaimed November 26, 1789 to be a Thanksgiving Day. But his successor, President Jefferson, felt it was unconstitutional to create a federal holiday. So Arlington was already in Federal hands before we got the day off. Now there are *ten* federal holidays—and 40% of them fall in these coming dark days of mid-November to New Years Day!

And this is not to mention the parisology of Halloween, All Saints Day, Election Day and Totensonntag (also called Ewigkeitssonntag). And of course there is also Columbus Day, Kwanzaa, Daylight Savings Day, Boxing Day and Solstice. It is a happy time of year, and apparently, during Lee's time, people even celebrated Thanksgiving with children in costume and the making of mischief and



Custis violin played by Risa Browder at 2005 Open House

treats (which sounds suspiciously like Halloween today). Yet, there are very few historic references to these holidays—especially Thanksgiving mischief—at Arlington House.

Halloween (and, to a lesser degree: All Saints Day) appear to have arrived in the United States primarily on the wave of immigrants from Ireland. Therefore, George Washington Parke Custis, a famous champion of the Irish, must surely have been aware of this quaint, if somewhat Pagan celebration. Yet it does not seem to have been practiced at Arlington. This is not overly surprising considering Halloween was new to the U.S. (and Irish jack-o-lanterns were often made in potatoes and turnips!) Thanksgiving, on the other hand, had been observed by Custis' "father,"

and was, despite contemporary accounts of costumes and treats, primarily a religious observance. Still there is no mention of it at Arlington House.

Christmas, however, has figured prominently at Arlington House over the years. In 1852, Agnes Lee wrote: "I am flying about preparing presents and hanging stockings...I spent the whole morning...being as happy as possible." But while Lee missed few Christmas' at home and made huge efforts to be with his family (from Mexico Lee wrote Mary in 1846: "...I have been absent on two or three other occasions on the day itself, yet have not been far distant & always arrived during the holy days."), where was the

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History Happenings

The Mystery of Mr. Custis' Paintings

"I have an excellent studio fitted up in the South wing of the house. . ."

George Washington Parke Custis
December 30, 1852

Many of you have asked about the history of Mr. Custis' paintings. The history of his Revolutionary War battle scenes is quite convoluted. Primary and secondary accounts often contradict one another. At this time, four of the paintings are on exhibit in the morning room: Monmouth, the largest, Trenton, Princeton, and Germantown. Museum records do not establish a firm date for any of the paintings.

As a young boy, Custis acquired an interest in painting from Nelly's tutor, William Dunlap, and his exposure to a wide variety of artists who visited Mount Vernon. As an adult, Custis turned to his artwork as one of his many outlets to pay tribute to George Washington. Eventually, Custis used the morning room and office as a studio. According to Markie Williams and other guests, Mr. Custis always asked visitors for their opinion of his artwork, and some were hard pressed to find a diplomatic answer! Benson Lossing, the historian who painted the famous watercolor of the mansion, praised the battle scenes for their historical accuracy and style during his 1853 visit. After the Civil War, he dismissed them as "very poor specimens."

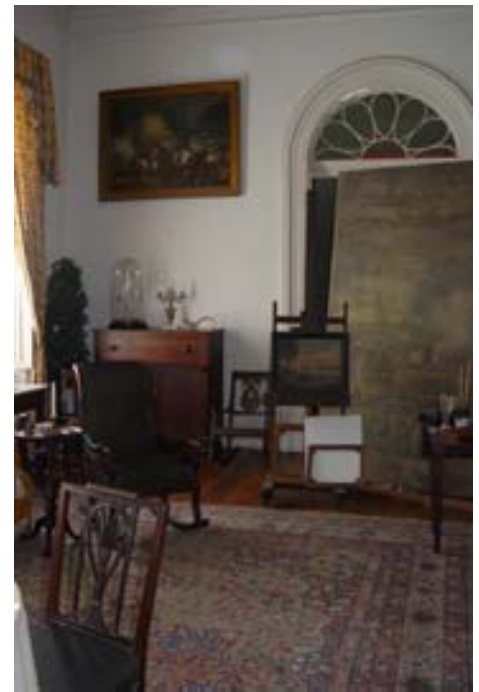
When did Custis produce his epic canvases, and which was displayed in the Capitol? A review of sources indicates that Mr. Custis displayed his artwork in the Capitol Rotunda twice. In 1836, one of his battle scenes was displayed temporarily in the capitol. VIP Elizabeth Pryor recently viewed a letter (5/23/1836) at the University of Virginia in which Charles Carter Lee wrote: "His (Custis') grand Picture, the battle of Princeton is being exhibited in the rotunda of the Capitol, but if the public have neglected it, the pens of the little tribe of scribblers have become as fretful at it as the

quills of porcupines." Three weeks earlier, RE Lee had written: "The 'big Picture' has been exhibited in the Capitol and has attracted some severe animadversions from the Critics . . ." according to another letter in the UVA archives. Yet Murray Nelligan identified the painting as that of the Battle of Trenton and claimed that it measured 13 by 11 feet. Nelligan's source was a letter (12/8/1835) from Custis to Jared Sparks. The letter to Sparks is owned by Harvard College; unfortunately, Nelligan did not make a copy for the files. Neither Trenton nor Princeton measures 13 by 11.

Although the identity of the painting exhibited in the 1830s remains something of a mystery, Custis' disappointment at its removal is well documented. Custis maintained that his picture was returned to him for political reasons. In a letter (4/25/36) to the Superintendent of the Capitol, Custis observed: "I might have hoped for more charity from the Public toward a production from a self taught artist. A set of H ____ (?) scribblers who infest the Capitol must abuse some one. . . I have now ordered my agent to remove the picture, and on his return to cast it from the bridge into the Potomac, that it may offend no more." Unfortunately, Custis did not provide the name of the painting in his letter.

Interestingly, Elizabeth Randolph Calvert (Childhood Days at Arlington manuscript) recalled a similar incident when she recorded her memories of her c. 1845 visit to Arlington. Calvert gave this account in her memoir:

He painted a picture for one of the spaces of the Rotunda of the capitol, which was not accepted, his mortification was so great that he told the men he sent to bring it away, to throw it in the river. Some years after I was playing about in the court yard, in the rear of the house, two colored men brought out a large, brown greasy looking bundle. I found on inquiry that it was "Master big picture, he told



us put it in the ribber, we is going to cut it up and make aprons wid it." As it was unrolled dim figures of men and horses were to be seen, these were to be boiled off, that the canvas might be made use of.

Calvert's account, which confirms Mr. Custis' version of the story, suggests that the painting in question was destroyed by the slaves during the 1840s.

According to Nelligan, in 1852 Custis "was retouching four paintings – Monmouth, Germantown, Trenton, and Princeton." That same year, he began working on his Surrender at Yorktown. When Benson Lossing visited in March, 1853, he indicated that the Yorktown painting was nearly finished. He also claimed that Trenton, Germantown, Monmouth, the Surrender at Yorktown, and Washington at Yorktown had all been painted within 6 years of each other. Lossing declared the Surrender at Yorktown "the largest and best of his paintings." "Markie" Williams was living at Arlington during this period. In November, 1853, she noted in her journal that the Yorktown painting was finished. On March 6, 1854, Markie recorded:

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History Happenings (continued)

dear uncle and myself were out this morning by times superintending the getting ready of the great picture to go to the Capitol. Uncle said last night “Markie as you write such a bold hand, I must ask you to write a card to accompany my picture. Just write said he “Surrender of York Town Oct. 19 1781. Designed and executed by GWP Custis of Arlington.”

Markie’s journal notation, in addition to other sources, clearly indicates that the Surrender at Yorktown was the painting which was displayed in the Rotunda in 1854. She also observed in January of the following year that Monmouth was at Arlington. During the Civil War, Markie “rescued” Monmouth from Arlington; the painting was stored at Tudor Place until it was returned to Arlington in the 1970s.

In the spring of 1856, Blanche Berard, a friend of Markie’s, visited Arlington House. In a letter (4/18/1856) to her mother, she noted:

The picture on which he is now at work is the battle of Trenton. It is almost finished and very fine. “The Chief” (Washington) as the dear old gentleman delights to call him is an admirable figure. Mr. Custis hopes to soon begin another picture, the “battle of Monmouth.” He is quite enthusiastic about “Molly Pitcher.”

Interestingly, on August 19, 1856, Markie observed that Custis was “busily engaged in painting the feet of his large white horse in the battle of Trenton.”

Clearly additional research needs to be undertaken before any firm conclusions can be reached about which painting was displayed in the Rotunda in the 1830s and when the various battle scenes were painted. As further research is completed, perhaps we will have answers to these perplexing questions.

Karen Kinzey, Historian

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER

Please contact Delphine Gross no later than the 20th of each month with availability dates and times to be posted the following month (Please call by November 20th with December information). Even if you are a regularly scheduled VIP please contact Delphine to confirm your availability. Again, the contact number is (703) 235-1530 ext. 227. Please leave the dates and times you are available on the voice mail. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

From the Office Down the Hall (continued)

“Christmas Holiday” as we know it? Although Arkansas recognized Christmas as an official holiday in 1836, the *Federal* holiday had to wait until Benjamin Harrison was President.

And Armistice Day (now Veteran’s Day) did not really arrive—at least as a federal holiday—until 1954!

So, although the days grow short and the deer can only pine for the luscious beans and corn they so resolutely destroyed this summer, there will be music in the House this holiday season and we have much to give thanks for. The Gilmore Light Ensemble will perform on Saturday, November 5 and,

magically, the Yorktown High School Madrigal Choir will sing carols December 11th. Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial is open seven day a week, every day except Christmas and New Years Day—so we still won’t get many *Federal* holidays. But it is in true holiday spirit that I give thanks to all our volunteers and staff that work to keep Arlington House warm and alive—especially during the holiday season!

Kendell Thompson
Site Manager
Arlington House,
The Robert E. Lee Memorial



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arlington House was the home of Robert E. Lee and his family for thirty years and is uniquely associated with the Washington and Custis families. It is now preserved as a memorial to General Lee, who gained the respect of Americans in both the North and the South.

Arlington House
The Robert E. Lee Memorial
c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

Phone
703-235-1530

Web Site
<http://www.nps.gov/arho>

The Spectacle online
<http://www.nps.gov/arho/tour/spectacle.html>

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Area Special Events

November 1-2

Living history encampment at Pitzer Woods and demonstrations on Little Round Top, Gettysburg National Park, PA. Free. 717-338-9114 or www.nps.gov/gett.

Reenactment and living history weekend in Stanardsville, VA, 20 miles north of Charlottesville off Route 29. Details: www.greeneva.com or 434-985-6663.

November 2

Artillery demonstrations at Fort Washington Park, MD (I-495, exit 3A). 1, 2 and 3 pm. Free with park admission. 301-763-4600 or www.nps.gov/fowa.

Living history, "The Ship's Company," naval demonstrations, displays and models at Fort Ward in Alexandria, VA. Noon-4 pm. Free. www.fortward.org or 703-838-4848.

November 7-9

Reenactment and living history at Laurel Hill, VA, birthplace of J.E.B. Stuart. Music, civilian and military demonstrations, food, speakers and book signings. Battles at 1:30 pm both Saturday and Sunday. Candlelight tour and evening skirmish Saturday. Camps open 10 am. Proceeds to benefit the Birthplace Trust. www.jebstuart.org.

North-South Skirmish Association's National Competition at Fort Shenandoah near Winchester, VA. Live-fire competitions featuring all variety of vintage weapons. Free. More info: www.n-ssa.org or 248-447-5909.

Conference, "The Generals and their Presidents," in Middleburg, VA. Sponsored by the Mosby Heritage Area. More info: www.mosbyheritagearea.org or 540-687-6681.

November 8

Tour, "Retreat from Gettysburg," begins near Seminary Ridge in Gettysburg, PA, ends in Williamsport, MD. This is a "convoy tour" following the course of the Confederate "wagon train of woe." \$35. Details: www.grace-under-fire.us.

Lecture, "Yankee River, Rebel Shore: The Union Navy and Civil Insurrection Along the Potomac and Rappahanock Rivers," at the USS Constellation in Baltimore's Inner Harbor. 2 pm. Free with admission. www.constellation.org.

Two-hour guided tour of part of the Brandy Station battlefield. Begins 10 am at the Graffiti House Visitor Center (just off Route 29 north of Culpeper, VA) at 10 am. \$5. www.brandystationfoundation.com or 540-547-4106.

Lantern Tours on the Hupp's Hill battlefield in Strasburg, VA. Tickets at the Stonewall Jackson Museum at Hupp's Hill. 7-9 pm. 540-465-5884 or www.waysideofva.com/stonewalljackson.

Battlefield Hike, ranger-led five-hour walk over the First Manassas Battlefield. Begins at noon at the visitor center. Free with park fee. 703-361-1339 or www.nps.gov/mana.

November 8-9

Living history, "John Brown's Legacy: Beyond the Gallows," special military and civilian programs at the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, WV. Free with admission. 304-535-6029 or www.nps.gov/hafe.

Living history and ranger programs at Drewry's Bluff, part of the Richmond National Battlefield Park, VA. 10 am-5 pm Saturday, 10 am-4 pm Sunday. Free. 804-226-1981 or www.nps.gov/rich.

November 9

Preservation Bike Ride to benefit the Kernstown Battlefield Foundation (near Winchester, VA). Courses marked for 25- and 55-mile rides. Registration 9 am. Contact Larry Duncan at 540-662-1824 or email lduncan@kernstownbattle.org.

November 13-15

Bus Tour, "Stonewall Becomes Lee's Right Arm — The Jackson Valley Campaign of 1862," based in Winchester, VA. Includes

reception and orientation dinner. Tour covers lower Valley sites at Winchester, Kernstown, Middletown, Strasburg. \$175 (does not include lodging). For more info, email ssnyder@su.edu or call 540-535-3543.

November 15

Living history walking tour, "Courage! The Civil War in Washington," explore the streets of the national capital with a "citizen." Meets at Cosi Coffee, 10th and "E" NW at 11 am. \$10 adults. www.historicstrolls.com or 301-588-9255.

Battlefield Hike, ranger-led five-hour walk over the Second Manassas Battlefield. Begins at noon at the visitor center. Free with park fee. 703-361-1339 or www.nps.gov/mana.

November 15-16

Symposium, "Great Controversies of the Civil War," sponsored by Pamplin Historical Park south of Petersburg, VA. Reservations, fee required. 877-PAMPLIN or www.pamplinpark.org

Reenactment, annual event on the Cedar Creek Battlefield, south of Middletown, VA. Encampments, military and civilian demonstrations and battles each day. More: www.cedarcreekbattlefield.org or 888-628-1864.

Living history, "John Brown Raid Anniversary," features portrayals of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln at the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, WV. Free with admission. 304-535-6029 or www.nps.gov/hafe.

Living history encampments at the Pennsylvania Memorial, Gettysburg National Park, PA. Free. www.nps.gov/gett or 717-338-9114.

Living history, "U.S. Sanitary Commission," at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, MD. 11 am-3 pm. Free with admission. 301-695-1864 or www.civilwarmed.org.

Area Special Events (continued)

November 21-22

Civil War Ghost Walks, candlelight tours on the “battlefield” at Endview Plantation in Newport News, VA. 7-10 pm. \$7. 757-887-1862 or www.endview.org.

November 21-23

Seminar and Tours, “The Irish and Germans in the Civil War,” includes lectures, tours of Gettysburg, Antietam, some meals, music. Based in Chambersburg, PA. Details: email chaden@chambersburg.org or 717-264-7101.

November 22

Tours, ranger-led, in-depth tours of the Monocacy battlefield at the Monocacy National Battlefield near Frederick, MD. Free. Details: www.nps.gov/mono or 301-662-3515

Two-hour guided tour of part of the Brandy Station battlefield. Begins 10 am at the Graffiti House Visitor Center (just off Route 29 north of Culpeper, VA) at 10 am. \$5. www.brandystationfoundation.com or 540-547-4106.

Walking tours and living history, “Spirits of New Market,” scary living history lantern tours of the New Market (VA) battlefield leave every half hour from the Hall of Valor Museum 7-8:30 pm. \$10 adult/\$5 children. Living history during the day with camp life and military demonstrations. 866-515-1864 or www.vmi.edu/newmarket.

Special event, “The Haunting of Liberia Plantation,” part of the Manassas Museum System, VA. Moonlight and lantern tours of the grounds with strange tales thrown in. 5:30-9 pm. \$15 advance/\$20 at the door. www.manassasmuseum.org or 703-368-1873.

Battlefield Hike, ranger-led five-hour walk over the First Manassas Battlefield. Begins at noon at the visitor center. Free with park fee. 703-361-1339 or www.nps.gov/mana.

November 22-23

Annual U.S. Sharpshooter’s Living history weekend — programs at Pitzer Woods and

Little Round Top. Also infantry living history encampments at the Pennsylvania Memorial and Spangler’s Spring, Gettysburg National Park, PA. Free. 717-338-9114 or www.nps.gov/gett.

November 23

Bus tour, “Petersburg’s Western Front” ranger-led tour includes visits to Fort Stedman, Dinwiddie Court House, Five Forks and much more. Leaves from the Petersburg National Battlefield’s (VA) visitor center 9:30 am, returns 5 pm. Bring bag lunch or purchase Sunday buffet on the tour. \$30 does not include lunch. Reservations required. 804-732-3531 extension 206.

Special tours, “Tales of the Spirits,” spooky stories at the Surratt House Museum in Clinton, MD. Tours 5-9 pm. Special program 7:30 pm. First come, first served. Details: www.surratt.org or 301-868-1121.

November 28

Living history tours, “The Spirited Past of Manassas,” 5-9 pm. \$10. Details: www.manassasmuseum.org or 703-368-1873.

November 28-29

Civil War Ghost Walk at the Exchange Hotel Civil War Museum in Gordonsville, VA. Details: 540-832-2944.

November 29

Civil War Symposium. 19th-century popular banjo and violin music performed on authentic instruments, 11:30 am-12:45 pm. Clara Barton living history, 1-2 pm. Lecture and exhibit on John Brown’s Raid on Harpers Ferry, 2-2:30 pm. All at the C. Burr Artz Public Library in Frederick, MD. Free. 301-694-1368.

Living history, “Haunted Cave Tours,” includes Civil War at the Stonewall Jackson Museum at Hupp’s Hill in Strasburg, VA. Fee charged. 540-465-5884 or www.waysideofva.com/stonewalljackson.

Haunted Harvest Hayride at the Staunton River Battlefield State Park near Randolph,

VA. 10 pm. Free. 434-454-4312 or www.stauntonriverbattlefield.org.

Battlefield Hike, ranger-led five-hour walk over the Second Manassas Battlefield. Begins at noon at the visitor center. Free with park fee. 703-361-1339 or www.nps.gov/mana.

Special program, “Ghost Stories around the Campfire,” Lee Hall in Newport News, VA. 7 pm. \$7. 757-888-3371 or www.leehall.org.

November 29-30

Living history, “The Eyes of the Army: The Cavalry Factor,” special demonstrations and 1 pm firing drills at the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, WV. Free with admission. 304-535-6029 or www.nps.gov/hafe.

Civil War show, Gettysburg Fall Show at the All Star Events Complex, Business Route 15 south of town. 9 am-5 pm Saturday, 9 am-3 pm Sunday. 717-642-6600.

Living history, “Signal Corps,” demonstrations at the Antietam National Battlefield (MD) at 1 pm each day. Free with admission. 301-432-5124 or www.nps.gov/anti

Special program, “Getting the Message Through,” Signal Corps activities with simultaneous demonstrations at Washington Monument State Park (South Mountain) near Boonsboro, MD and the Antietam National Battlefield. 1 pm both days. Free. 301-432-8065.

Living history, “The Battlefield Embalmer: Preserving the Civil War Dead,” at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, MD. 11 am-3 pm. Free with admission. 301-695-1864 or www.civilwarmed.org.

Significant Historic Events in November

November, 1833

North Point, or *Baltimore Defended*, a play by GWP Custis is about the bombardment of Fort McHenry in the War of 1812, was produced in Baltimore after Mr. Custis had rewritten it. Fireworks may have “played a large part in the climatic scenes.”

November, 1834

Mrs. Custis took the steamboat to Old Point Comfort (Fort Monroe), Virginia to bring home her daughter and her first grandchild. Robert E. Lee returned to Arlington later in the month to assume his duties as assistant to General Charles Gratiot, Chief of Engineers, in Washington.

November, 1835

GWP Custis sent historian Jared Sparks the Wollaston portrait of Martha Washington and the Houdon bas-relief of Washington so that they might be copied and then published in Spark’s edition of George Washington letters. Custis suggested that the portraits be exhibited in a Boston gallery to help raise money for the Bunker Hill monument then under construction.

November, 1851

The 125-foot steam ferry, *George Washington Parke Custis*, was launched from a Washington shipyard. Expressly designed to navigate the shallow waters of the Potomac near Arlington, the *Custis* was flat-bottomed and drew only one foot of water. During the Civil War the United States Navy stripped the ferry of its engines and boilers and transformed it into a floating ascension deck for observation balloons—the first such vessel in the world.

November, 1855

The renovation of the White Parlor was nearly complete, and Lee writing from Fort Riley, suggested that a view of (or from) West Point should be hung in that room.

November, 1858

The improvements at Arlington begun by Robert E. Lee were all under way despite his

impatience at his lack of money. Many of the buildings, roads and fences had been repaired, and by winter there would be a new slate roof on the house and a new gravel one on the stable. The mill and the overseer’s house were put back in repair, and stone foundations were laid for a new barn.

November, 1861

A United States Army surgeon wrote that after the vandalism he had witnessed, “it was a pleasurable relief to find [at Arlington House]... respect for the property and furniture...[T]he walls of almost every room in the immense old building are covered with the rich paintings and old family pictures.”

November, 1845 (late)

Eight-year-old W.H.F. “Rooney” Lee cut off two of his fingertips—one down to the first joint—while playing with a straw cutter at the Lee’s home in Fort Hamilton, New York. Mrs. Lee postponed her planned trip to Arlington. Lee himself was gravely concerned that if the fingertips could not be successfully reattached, Rooney would be maimed for life. Though surgery was unsuccessful, the fingers eventually healed so well that they were virtually unnoticed and prove no handicap to Rooney’s future careers.

November 1, 1829

Brevet Second Lieutenant Roberts E. Lee arrived in Savannah, Georgia. His assignment, his first since graduating from West Point, was to assist in the construction of a fort on Cockspur Island—later named Fort Pulaski—for the defense of the city. Lee worked at Cockspur until April 21, 1831, when he was assigned to Old Point Comfort (Fort Monroe), Virginia.

November 5, 1781

John Parke “Jack(ey)” Custis died of “camp fever” at “Eltham” near Yorktown shortly after the British surrender on October 19. According to family tradition, General Washington said, “From this moment I adopt his two youngest children as my own.”

George and Martha Washington raised, GWP and Eleanor “Nellie” Custis, the two younger children.

November 5, 1873

Mrs. Robert E. (Mary Anna Randolph Custis) Lee, 65, died at Lexington, Virginia, 92 years to the day after the death of her grandfather, Jack Custis. Her daughter Agnes had died on October 15, and according to Mildred Lee, she never “railed from this blow.”

November 6, 1850

GWP Custis “escorted Edmond Lafayette, grandson of the Marquis, to Mount Vernon, where he showed him about and told him the tales of the old days there.”

November 6, 1860

Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. His election was a catalyst for increased secessionist activity in the South. Commenting on the election, the *Charleston Mercury* said, “the tea has been thrown overboard, the revolution of 1860 has been initiated.”

November 8, 1864

One of the last hopes for a negotiated settlement of the War and Confederate independence was dashed by the re-election of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States. Lincoln received more than 55% of the popular vote and ten times the electoral votes of his Democratic opponent, Major General George B. McClellan.

November 10, 1785

George Washington wrote in a private letter that both Nellie Custis, 6, and GWP Custis, 4, were “promising children” but that the boy was ‘ a remarkable fine one, and my intention is to give him a liberal education; the rudiments of which, shall, if I live, be in my won family.”

November 10, 1850

The German artist Emanuel Leutze thanked GWP Custis for his “most valuable

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Significant Historic Events in November (continued)

communications” about George Washington’s army at the time of the Battle of Trenton. Leutze was at work painting “Washington Crossing the Delaware”—one of the most famous and inaccurate of all historical paintings—and promised to send Custis a drawing or a daguerreotype of his work when it was finished.

November 11, 1857

Robert E. Lee, having obtained leave from his command in Texas arrived back at Arlington, two and a half weeks after the death of his father-in-law, GWP Custis. In his memorandum book he wrote, “Found all sad, suffering and sick, and the chair of him who had always recd. me with kindness and affection—vacant.”

November 12, 1810

GWP Custis, writing to E.S. Logan, described his efforts to aid the “little farmer” in breeding and raising a native breed of sheep.

November 15, 1796

George Washington wrote to his ward, GWP Custis a student at the College of New Jersey at Princeton: “It gives me pleasure to hear that you are agreeably fixed. I receive still more from the assurance you give of attending closely to your studies. It is you yourself who is to derive immediate benefit from there. Your country may do it hereafter.”

November 21, 1826

In an installment of his *Recollection of Washington* entitled “His Portrait,” GWP Custis described the General’s appearance and physique. “Most portraits of the General, he said, made him appear too bulky, instead of tall and lean. Describing Washington’s physical prowess as a horseman and athlete, he told how the General had once thrown a piece of *slate* the size and shape of a silver dollar across the Rappahannock River below Fredericksburg.”

November 22, 1857

Writing to Harriet Talcott, Mrs. Lee

described her second child, Mary Lee Custis, as “a clear brunette with brown hair, very fine large black eyes, and a perfect little mouth and respectable nose and is perfectly fat and healthy.” She also mentioned, however, that she had been bedridden for almost four months after giving birth to Mary on July 12.

November 22, 1918

Mary Custis Lee, 83, died at Homestead Hotel, Hot Springs, Virginia eleven days after the signing of the Armistice which ended World War I.

November 24, 1809

In a notice published in the *National Intelligencer*, GWP Custis announced that “in addition to the usual awards at the next sheep-shearing, the family that had made the greatest quantity of clothing at home during the previous year at the Arlington mill. The same privilege would go also to the farmer who had ‘manured the most land from his own resources in the last 12 months’—perhaps the first award of its kind ever made in America. There would also be a prize awarded for the most practical ‘National Military Dress’ displayed.”

November 24, 1810

The *National Intelligencer* published extracts from an address of GWP Custis in which he advocated soil conservation, national self-sufficiency, a National Board of Agriculture, and an “Order of Washington” to recognize those who “shall do some good to mankind, either in the progress of national aggrandizement, or productive industry.”

November 24, 1860

From his post in Texas, Robert E. Lee wrote to his son Custis that the “Southern States seem to be in a convulsion and confidence in their securities shaken. It is difficult to see what will be the result, but I hope all will end well...My little personal troubles sink into insignificance when I contemplate the condition of the country, and I feel as if I could easily lay down my life for its safety. But I also feel that would bring but little

good.”

In the same letter Lee expressed regret that Montgomery Meigs had been removed from his engineering position in Washington because of what Lee believed to be a feud between officers. “I know Meigs to be capable and qualified.”

November 25, 1963

President John F. Kennedy was buried on the hillside below Arlington House after being assassinated in Dallas, Texas on November 22.

November 27, 1855

Having finished court-martial duty at Fort Riley, Kansas, Lee received orders to sit on another court-martial board at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Since he was coming back east, he had time to visit his family and arrived at Arlington on the 26th. For the first time, Lee saw how the “big room” had been transformed into the White Parlor.

November 28, 1862

General Lee asked his wife to “arrange for the people whom I wish to liberate the 31 December...Perry, Billy and such of those as are at the White House as wish it or who can support themselves, must be included. Indeed I should like to include the whole list at Arlington, White House, and c., if it can be done so as to finish the business.”

November 30, 1859

Robert E. Lee arrived at Harper’s Ferry about noon to command troops ordered to guard the arsenal from threatened attack during and after the scheduled execution of John Brown on December 2 at Charlestown, ten miles away. “At Harper’s Ferry nothing more exciting happened than the arrival of Brown’s body and its transshipment to Philadelphia.” Lee and the troops were returned to their respective stations on December 12. “The country continued to debate bitterly the rights and wrongs of Brown’s attempt, but the affair seems to have affected Lee very little.”

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Turkey Soup

This recipe comes from the Lee Family Cookbook, and is a good way to use those Thanksgiving leftovers. According to the cookbook this soup "would have been welcomed after the war by the many southerners, black and white, who were subsisting mostly on cornmeal, fatback, and molasses."

The 19th century instructions are as follows:
The carcass of a turkey, a few pieces of lean middling or ham, a few onion & perhaps a carrot, - an hour before dinner pour in a pint of milk, having brought the milk to the boiling point & stirred in a tablespoon of flour made to a pate with a little milk if the milk is thin. Herbs if you have them & season with pepper & salt. If you have celery put it in after the onions, if parsley put in the tureen & pour soup on it - let it simmer.

Remains of a 20 lb. turkey
About 3 qts. Water
About 1 lb. country ham or bacon
2-3 medium onions, roughly chopped
1-2 carrots, roughly chopped

1-2 ribs celery with leaves, roughly chopped
About ½ c. parsley, chopped
About 1 c. ham liquor, if available
2c. half-and-half
1-2 T. flour, if desired as thickening

Break up carcass. .Cover with water and ham broth if used. Add onions and carrots and simmer at least 1 ½ hours. Add celery, simmer about 1 hour more. Strain off broth. Discard vegetables. Pull lean ham and turkey to shreds and reserve; discard bones. If broth is not intensely flavored, cook down. Before serving, return turkey and ham to broth and add half-and-half. If thickening with flour, stir in cold water to make a paste and stir into soup. Simmer, stirring occasionally, at least 20 minutes. Correct seasoning. Put chopped parsley in bottom of tureen or bowls and pour soup over. Serves about 10-12.

Taken from *The Robert E. Lee Family Cooking and Housekeeping Book*

Contributed by Kara Walker

VIP Trip

The volunteer trip to the Appomattox Court House National Historical Park has been rescheduled for this Spring. But we will also be taking a small group of volunteers to Appomattox on Saturday, November 19, 2005. If you are interested in joining us on the 19th please leave a message for Delphine at (703) 235-1530 before November 5th.

This will be a day-long trip. We will leave from the OAB (Old Administration Building) at 8:00 AM and return around 7:30 PM. Appomattox is approximately three and a half hours from Arlington. The Park Service will reimburse volunteers for their lunches. You may also want to bring snacks for the ride home.

Music at Arlington - Open House 2005



Mount Zion Baptist Church Mens Chorus



Federal City Brass Band

November 2005

Arlington House VIP Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Kathie Lipovac 12:30-4:30 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	2 Aaron LaRocca 12:00-3:00	3 Walter DeGroot 9:30-11:30 Charlotte Needham and Elaine Street 10:30-1:00 Gene Cross 11:00-4:30	4 Joan Cashell 9:30-11:30 Aaron LaRocca 1:00-4:00	5 Marmie Edwards 9:30-4:00 Aaron LaRocca 10:00-3:00 Delia Rios 12:00-2:00 Hope Flanagan 1:00-4:00
6 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30 Andrew Strait 1:30-4:30	7 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	8 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	9 Elizabeth Pryor 9:00-12:30 Aaron LaRocca 12:00-3:00 Arlene Riley 2:00-4:00	10 Walter DeGroot 9:30-11:30 Elaine Street 10:30-1:00 Gene Cross 11:00-4:30	11 Joan Cashell 9:30-11:30 Laura Graham 12:00-4:00 Aaron LaRocca 1:00-4:00	12 Aaron LaRocca 10:00-3:00
13 Elene Paul 10:00-2:00 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30 Andrew Strait 1:30-4:30	14 Jo Schoolfield 9:30-12:30 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	15 Kathie Lipovac 12:30-4:30 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	16 Aaron LaRocca 12:00-3:00	17 Walter DeGroot 9:30-11:30 Charlotte Needham and Elaine Street 10:30-1:00 Gene Cross 11:00-4:30	18 Joan Cashell 9:30-11:30 Laura Graham 12:00-4:00 Aaron LaRocca 1:00-4:00	19 Marmie Edwards 10:00-1:00 Aaron LaRocca 10:00-3:00
20 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30 Andrew Strait 1:30-4:30	21 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	22 Kathie Lipovac 12:30-4:30 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	23 Elizabeth Pryor 9:00-12:30 Arlene Riley 2:00-4:00 Andrew Strait 9:30-12:30	24 Thanksgiving	25 Joan Cashell 9:30-11:30 Aaron LaRocca 1:00-4:00	26 Marmie Edwards 10:00-1:00 Aaron LaRocca 10:00-3:00 Delia Rios 12:00-3:30 Hope Flanagan 1:00-3:00
27 Elene Paul 10:00-2:00 Jim Pearson 12:30-4:30	28 Jo Schoolfield 10:00-2:00 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	29 Kathie Lipovac 12:30-4:30 Fred Hoffman 1:00-4:00	30 Aaron LaRocca 12:00-3:00			

If you are available to volunteer, but are not on the calendar please call Delphine so you can be added to the schedule.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arlington House
The Robert E. Lee Memorial
c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
Turkey Run Park
McLean, VA 22101

<<Name>>
<<Address>>
<<CityStateZip>>

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The Spectacle is a monthly newsletter for the volunteers of Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial.

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c/o George Washington Memorial Parkway
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Volunteers Needed

The roster of active volunteers is in dire need of additional names! If you know anyone interested in joining our ranks please refer them to Delphine Gross, Volunteer Coordinator (703) 235-1530 ext 227.

